

BENTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

John M. Brown, Jr.
Chairman

Russell J. Anzalone
Secretary



Robbyn Tumey
Member

Kim Dennison
Election Coordinator

Office (479) 271-1049 - Fax (479) 271-5749
kimberly.dennison@bentoncountyar.gov or sharon.rose@bentoncountyar.gov

MINUTES OF THE BENTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION

June 27, 2013

Commission members present: John Brown, Jr., Russell Anzalone, and Robbyn Tumey

Others present: Election Coordinator Kim Dennison, Sharon Rose, Dana Caler, Tiffany Underwood, Bentonville School Superintendent Michael Poore, Kathy Breed, Mayor Bill Edwards, and Jim Parsons

Media: Tom Sissom, Benton County Daily Record

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. and welcomed everyone.

New Business:

- A. Discussion of Polling Sites for the Annual School Election: Chairman Brown stated that according to A.C.A. §6-14-106, the Election Commission shall consult with the school districts regarding polling locations. He reported that the Bentonville School Board has approached the Election Commission regarding the use of some of their schools for voting sites. Chairman Brown stated that he wanted to clarify for Jim Parsons of Bella Vista that the schools would not be the only voting sites for the annual school election. Chairman Brown stated that the regular voting locations would be available and that the commission is trying to expand early voting sites. Mr. Parsons apologized for misunderstanding that the schools would be the only voting locations and that Superintendent Michael Poore had also informed him of this correction.

Chairman Brown opened the floor for discussion and recognized Bentonville School Superintendent Michael Poore. Mr. Poore thanked the commission and expressed his appreciation for allowing the Bentonville School district to share their thoughts on polling locations for the Annual School Election. Mr. Poore stated that Mary Ley, District Communications Director, had previously presented a plan to the commission using the administration building, Ruth Hale Barker Middle School, Ardis Ann Middle School, and Cooper Elementary School as polling sites for the Annual School Election. Mr. Poore stated that several parents had asked about using the schools during last year's school election and the board went through a lengthy process before making an offer for the use of the schools and office space. Mr. Poore reiterated that the polling sites were chosen with safety in mind and that the school district has arranged to have police officers at these proposed sites on Election Day. Mr. Poore stated that the gymnasiums would be used for voting, which would minimize contact with students and also there would be easy access to the schools. Mr. Poore stated that his intent is to increase locations and accessibility for all registered voters. Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Poore for coming and asked Commissioners Anzalone and Tumey if they had any questions or comments.

Commissioner Tumey stated that her concern is that if the schools are not available to be permanent polling locations, the process it takes to redirect voters to a different voting location causes a lot of voter confusion. Mr. Poore stated that his concern with using the schools during the month of May is that that is one of the district's testing periods, and the schools try to minimize distractions for the students. Dana Caler, Voter Supervisor reported that the County Clerk's Office is required by state law to send notices to voters each time a polling place is changed and that state law also requires that run-off elections must be held in the same voting location as was used for that election. Dana asked Mr. Poore if the school administration office could be used as an early voting site. Mr. Poore responded that he would be in favor of the administration office being used as an early voting site.

Mr. Poore thanked the commissioners for allowing him to present the school district's offer for polling locations. Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Poore for his presentation.

Centerton Mayor Bill Edwards stated that he wanted to support Mr. Poore in using the school's gymnasiums as polling locations and that he feels it will help reduce the lines in future elections. Mr. Jim Parsons of Bella Vista stated that he is not in favor of having voting in the schools, since it is a school related election. Mr. Parsons stated that he feels it is a conflict of interest and he recognizes that the commissioners need to make the polling locations fair and equal to all voters. Chairman Brown thanked Mayor Edwards and Mr. Parsons for their comments.

Chairman Brown asked Commissioners Anzalone and Tumey for comments. Commissioner Tumey stated that the timing for the school district is unfortunate because of the new laws going into effect in 2014 regarding the number of registered voters per precinct and the transferring of voters to new locations, and looking for new voting sites. Commissioner Tumey stated there is a perception of favoritism of going to the schools for voting, from the comments that she has received. Commissioner Anzalone stated concerns with the number of changes that will take effect in 2014 and the Election Commission trying to establish permanent locations to reduce confusion to the voters on Election Day.

Chairman Brown reported that a new state law was passed that places a cap of 3,000 voters, per voting precinct and because of this change, the Election Commission will be required to create additional precincts. Chairman Brown stated that with the upcoming changes, it has made the school district's offer too difficult to handle at this time, but that he would like to look into using the schools for voting locations in the future. Chairman Brown asked for additional comments.

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Tumey made a motion to accept or deny the Bentonville School District's proposal to use Ruth Hale Barker Middle School, Ardis Ann Middle School, Cooper Elementary School, and the administration building as polling locations for the Annual School Election to be held September 17, 2013.

A voice vote was recorded as follows:

3 – Against

Motion, to use the Bentonville Schools for the Annual School Election, failed.

Chairman Brown asked Commissioners Anzalone and Tumey to give him and Kim authority to research early voting sites for the school election. Commissioners Anzalone and Tumey gave their authorization. Chairman Brown commented that he felt that there would be a good turnout in Bentonville and Bella Vista for the Annual School Election. Kim reported that she had approval from Riordan Hall to use their facility for early voting and that she had contacted Iberia Bank on Walton and 8th Streets, as another early voting location. She stated that she left a message for Assistant Manager Jodie Russell, but that Ms. Russell has not returned her call. Kim mentioned that

the Centerton Fire House and the three (3) County Clerk's Offices could also be early voting sites. Dana stated that she and Kim could also visit the Bentonville School Administration Building as a potential early voting site.

Other Business:

None

Old Business:

None

Public Comment:

None

Announcements:

None

Adjournment:

Chairman Brown made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Tumey. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell J. Anzalone, Secretary
Prepared by Sharon Rose
Benton County Election Commission